

PRESS RELEASE

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USAID AND THE COMMISSION FOR THE SUPPORT OF REFORM AND MODERNIZATION OF JUSTICE CELEBRATED THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF PUBLIC DEFENSE PROGRAM

SANTO DOMINGO – The Agency for International Development (USAID) celebrated with the Commission for the Support of Reform and Modernization of Justice, the third anniversary of the Public Defense Program of the Commission. This initiative is part of the “Strengthening Rule of Law and Respect for Human Rights Program” of USAID, which was budgeted at worth US\$10.8 millions and later amended to US\$14.6 millions.

The program gives Dominicans technical assistance, training and logistical support from the United States to establish initiatives that will contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law. The amendment signed last September engages the Dominican Government formally to create a more rigorous selection, retention and evaluation process for the Public Ministry district attorneys.

USAID’s assistance includes strategic planning to the Commissioner for the creation of a national system of public defense and training to the district public attorneys, negotiators and community conciliators. Likewise, this program undertakes the technical assistance needed so that the Judicial Attorney can evaluate the requirements of reform on the Free Legal Assistance Program of the Supreme Court.

Attending the event was Ms. Elena Brineman, USAID Director, who addressed the attendees. Ms. Brineman congratulated Enrique Garcia, Commission Coordinator, on behalf of the Commission for his hard work and commitment in favor of the needed reforms. She also expressed her wish that the program continue expanding until reaching “a real national public defense system; one that does not leave anyone alone before justice”.

“We are providing assistance to the justice sector and will continue doing so, because we understand that the primary condition to consolidate democracy is a truly, independent and equal justice system – meaning justice that does not care about social, political or economic status of the victim,” added Ms. Brineman.

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Attending the event was Ms. Milagros Ortiz Bosch, Vice President of the Dominican Republic, several Secretariats of State, attorneys and many others.